



OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS



WESTSIDE MASTER GARDENERS

IBERVILLE SWAMP LIFE EXPO

The annual Swamp Life Expo immerses participants in the vibrant culture and rich history of Iberville Parish. Held at the North Iberville Visitor's Center in Grosse Tete, LA, this free event, generously sponsored by the Iberville Parish government, takes place on the first Saturday of October from 10 AM to 2 PM.

As part of the month-long celebration known as Experience Atchafalaya Days, organized by the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, the Swamp Life Expo showcases the unique heritage, delicious cuisine, and fascinating traditions of the people and waterways of Iberville Parish. Attendees can enjoy a variety of activities, including folk art displays, ecological exhibits, and hands-on educational demonstrations.

At the exposition, the Westside Master Gardeners shared their expertise, recruited new members, and answered gardening-related questions. Their booth featured cuttings of native plants, offering attendees the chance to explore, learn about, and potentially incorporate these beautiful additions into their own landscapes. Out of the approximately 500 visitors who attend each year, around 200 engage with the Master Gardeners, making it a fantastic opportunity to learn and connect.



Attendees have an opportunity to participate in a range of activities at the Iberville Swamp Life Expo.

PLAQUEMINE CITY POT PROJECT

Every spring and fall, the dedicated Westside Master Gardeners come together to beautify the city of Plaquemine by planting vibrant flowers. This cherished tradition not only brings a splash of color to the city but also fosters a sense of community and pride among residents. The city boasts 26 pots strategically placed along Railroad Avenue and near the Community Center, creating picturesque spots that delight both locals and visitors alike. Additionally, the Westside Master Gardeners take immense pride in maintaining the flower bed at the Plaquemine Fire Station, ensuring it remains a beautiful and welcoming sight.

In preparation for planting, the Westside Master Gardeners meticulously clean the pots several days in advance, ensuring a pristine environment for the new blooms. This careful attention to detail reflects their commitment to excellence and their love for the community. The flowers, sourced from Dupont's Nursery in Plaquemine, are carefully selected for their beauty and resilience, ensuring that they thrive throughout the seasons. To gather support for this initiative, all Westside Master Gardeners and any interested community members are invited to participate in this rewarding project. The call for volunteers is met with enthusiasm, as many are eager to contribute to the beautification of their city.

This project is a heartfelt effort to enhance the aesthetic appeal of Plaquemine for its residents, businesses, and visitors. The colorful pots not only brighten up the community center, water park, and various community events but also contribute to the overall charm of the city. The Westside Master Gardeners make a concentrated effort to educate residents while replenishing and planting flowers, sharing their knowledge and passion for gardening. This educational aspect ensures that the community continues to benefit from their expertise long after the flowers have been planted. Through their dedication and hard work, the Westside Master Gardeners ensure that every corner of the city reflects their care and commitment, making Plaquemine a more beautiful place for everyone.



Westside Master Gardener volunteers install new plants in one of the pots.

2024 PLANT SALES

The Westside Master Gardeners proudly hosted their two annual plant sales on April 13th and May 11th, 2024. These events are the culmination of months of meticulous preparation, beginning in the fall of the previous year and continuing right up until the day before each sale.

The dedication and passion of the members have made the Westside Master Gardeners' plant sales a highly anticipated event within the community. Renowned for offering a diverse array of healthy and beautiful plants, ranging from 4-inch pots to large 20-inch containers, these sales attract hundreds of eager buyers from both local and surrounding cities.

The success of these sales extends beyond merely providing quality plants. The proceeds are used to support 4-H camperships for 4-H members in the Iberville and West Baton Rouge Parishes. This year, the organization is thrilled to have sponsored 17 campers, granting them the opportunity to attend 4-H Camp at Camp Grant Walker.

These plant sales are not just about gardening; they are about fostering a sense of community and giving back. The Westside Master Gardeners are deeply grateful for the unwavering support of their members and the community, and they look forward to continuing this cherished tradition of growth and generosity in the years to come.

BELVIEW PARK PLANTING PROJECT

Throughout his 20-year tenure, Parish President Mitchell Ourso and the Iberville Parish Government have consistently supported the Westside Master Gardeners by providing a greenhouse for plant propagation and storage for the annual spring and Mother's Day plant sales. Upon the retirement of Parish President Mitchell Ourso, who served as Parish President for five consecutive terms, the Westside Master Gardeners sought to honor his tenure by planting the flowerbeds at the new Iberville Parish Parks and Recreation sports complex on Bellview Road in Plaquemine.

The Westside Master Gardeners also wished to extend their gratitude to the parish maintenance department, which has provided invaluable assistance over the years. Their support included repairs to the water lines for the sprinkler systems in both the greenhouse and shade house, as well as fulfilling various requests from the Iberville LSU AgCenter and the Westside Master Gardeners.

In the fall of 2023, the Westside Master Gardeners planted bright yellow and dark blue pansies in the extensive flowerbed in front of the large Sports Complex entry brick sign, as well as in the flowerbeds flanking the tennis courts and the baseball batting cages. Additionally, limestone was spread around and between the greenhouse and shade house to facilitate maintenance. The vibrant pansies, reflecting Ourso's official colors of yellow and black, were a fitting tribute to his legacy.



Westside Master Gardener volunteers after installing plants at Belleview Park.